What is claimed is:

1. A checkout system comprising:

a computer;

a barcode reader coupled to the computer for reading a barcode label on an item; and

a security system coupled to the computer and activated by the barcode reader following reading of the barcode label including

a field generator for deactivating a security label on the item; and

a sensor for sensing placement of the item within range of the field generator;

wherein the security system initiates display of a message instructing an operator to place the item within a deactivation range of the field generator until the sensor senses the placement.

2. The checkout system as recited in claim 1, wherein the sensor is operational only during self-service checkout operation.

3. A checkout system convertible between assisted-service and self-service checkout operation comprising:

a computer;

a barcode reader coupled to the computer for reading a barcode label on an item; and

a security system coupled to the computer and activated by the barcode reader following reading of the barcode label including

a field generator for deactivating a security label on the item; and

a pop-up housing moveable between a raised position for self-service checkout operation and a recessed position for assisted-service checkout operation;

wherein the pop-up housing contains a sensor for sensing placement of the item within a deactivation range of the field generator during self-service checkout operation; and

wherein the security system initiates display of a message instructing a self-service customer to place the item within the deactivation range of the field generator until the sensor senses the placement during self-service checkout operation.

4. A product security system comprising:

a field generator for deactivating a security label on an item; and

a pop-up housing moveable between a raised position for self-service checkout operation and a recessed position for assisted-service checkout operation;

wherein the pop-up housing contains a sensor for sensing placement of the item within a deactivation range of the field generator during self-service checkout operation; and

wherein the security system initiates display of a message instructing a self-service customer to place the item within the deactivation range of the field generator until the sensor senses the placement during self-service checkout operation.

5. A transaction method comprising the steps of:

reading a barcode label on an item by a barcode reader;

obtaining barcode information from the barcode reader by a computer;

activating a field generator for deactivating a security label on the item by the computer;

determining whether the item comes within a deactivation range of the field generator by the computer; and

if the item does not come within the deactivation range, initiating display of a message instructing an operator to place the item within the deactivation range of the field generator.

6. A transaction method comprising the steps of:

positioning a sensor to identify an item within a deactivation range of a field generator;

reading a barcode label on the item by a barcode reader;

obtaining barcode information from the barcode reader by a computer;

activating the field generator to deactivate a security label on the item by the computer;

determining from the sensor whether the item comes within the deactivation range of the field generator by the computer; and

if the item does not come within the deactivation range, initiating display of a message instructing an operator to place the item within the deactivation range of the field generator.